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| WorkFirst Customized Community Initiative 2004-2005 |
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Enhanced Pregnancy to Employment

Baby Steps to Employment

Population to be served:

The target population is any TANF client in the pregnancy to employment track at the Alderwood CSO. This involves individuals who are pregnant or who have given birth to a child and the child is under one year of age. Currently in the PTE track, clients are required to participate in job search up to their third trimester, and no participation is mandatory from 3 months prior to birth, up to the baby's fourth month. Case staffings will be held on a regular basis with all partners to insure that clients are in appropriate full time activities with employment as the goal. At this time, the targeted group is estimated to be about 120 individuals, 60 of those currently pregnant, who comprise about 20% of the adult TANF caseload for the Alderwood CSO.

For the Enhanced Pregnancy to Employment program, we propose that clients who are eligible include those who are pregnant on July 1, 2004 **OR** whose child is under 12 months of age on July 1, 2004. For purposes of this program, PTE LEP clients in Level 5 or 6 would be able to continue with ESL classes if necessary to increase employability. Similar to the general population, Individuals will participate 32-40 hours per week in appropriate activities through the third trimester unless their doctor deems otherwise. Return to participation will be expected after release from the doctor's care at approximately 6 weeks. Participation is voluntary for those individuals in their last trimester or those who have been released from Doctor's care. Those individuals in a PI track who are currently mandatory would be required to participate.

This proposal should not affect the rest of the caseload. It may impact the support services available to the remainder of the TANF population. However, this is an incentive-based participation program, as opposed to sanction-based. Support services will be used to provide incentives to the population to encourage participation.

Outcomes and measurements:

Fifty percent (50%) of participants will obtain unsubsidized employment at a minimum of \$9.18 an hour by the baby's first birthday. There are three main components to this program that will enable us to meet this goal. These components include early assessment, preparation for employment and increased family stabilization skills.

1. Early Assessment includes an initial assessment completed by the CSO WorkFirst social worker to address the following areas / issues: pregnancy, health, domestic violence, mental

- health, drug and alcohol, identifying learning disabilities, and any other aspect that impacts the family. Employment Security, Edmonds Community College or Cascadia Community College will administer and evaluate CASAS and COPS testing for basic skills and occupational interests & values preference for a comprehensive career inventory.
2. Preparation for employment includes GED or High School completion, Vocational training, Customized Job Skills Training, High Wage /High Demand, Community Jobs, WorkFirst Work Study, English as a Second Language classes, Vocational English as a Second Language classes connected to CJST, and job shadowing. All clients would then enter Job Search with Employment Security. If appropriate, individuals would be placed in job search immediately rather than go through training or GED.
 3. Family stabilization skills' component, unlike the other two, is ongoing throughout the program.

Prior to the birth of the child and post-birth, once she is medically released, the mothers will participate full time (32-40 hours) in the appropriate activities listed above, but all will participate in the "Mom and Baby Club." This group will meet weekly and cover topics such as parenting resources, family life skills, family planning, safety, nutrition, health resources, child/parent activities, family literacy and career exploration. The facilitation for this group would be coordinated through Edmonds Community College Family Life Education Department and the Center for Families. The group also provides an opportunity for the LPA to enhance our role in the greater community by working with hospitals to provide community education classes, and local libraries to lead the clients through sessions on reading with their children.

Waivers:

- An EJAS query is needed to make data extraction easier for the monthly reviews. The LPA asks that a special new EJAS code be considered so a query would be easier to accomplish. A spreadsheet will also be maintained to assist with tracking. A new EJAS code would enable us to track the population in this program separately. For each client, the end date of the code would be the baby's first birthday.
- **The LPA also asks that the measure of employment within 90 days of completion of job search and/or training be waived for those individuals participating in this PI track effective July 1, 2004.** This will allow pregnant individuals to complete training / job search prior to birth then obtain employment immediately after medical release. This measure would need to be waived for all partners including Employment Security, Edmonds and Cascadia Community Colleges.
- **ESL PTE clients in Levels 5 or 6 may take additional ESL / VESL classes if necessary for vocational training or employment at our target wage.**
- In addition, full-time participation through the 3rd trimester and post-pregnancy would be encouraged through an incentive based program unless overruled by a doctor. Countable activities would need to include childbirth and preparation for baby classes, medical appointments, tours of hospitals and birthing facilities, newborn care and feeding classes and visits with public health nurses.
- Also, for those with their first child on TANF, full-time participation vs. 20 hours a week will be encouraged.

Full time participation will be encouraged for all in the PI track and will be incentive based. Those who have a mandatory participation requirement under the current Pregnancy to Employment rules will be required to participate and if necessary, sanctioned as appropriate for non-participation. Voluntary participants (those who do not have a mandatory participation requirement under the current Pregnancy to Employment rules) will lose their incentives for failure to participate. The incentives could include: diapers and wipes (purchased in bulk and distributed,) gift cards for clothing and hygiene, books for children, computers through community based programs, day planners and diaper bags.

Some of these items will be purchased with WorkFirst Support Service funds. The LPA will also solicit incentives from local retailers such as Costco. Age appropriate children's books would be another good option and will be explored with local libraries and volunteer groups.